



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 2, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Oppose SB 690 – Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in opposition of SB 690. This bill bans the use of cages in an egg-laying farms in Maryland starting January 1, 2025.

The economic impact to an existing farm to make these changes is a 41% increase in cost of production to retrofit the existing barns and an 119% increase in labor. By moving to a cage-free operation, the hen mortality rate increases significantly due to more bacterial habitat being introduced in the barn. Lastly, these farms are contracted with out of state companies that will just drop their contracts with the farms and then these farms will have to create a new demand for their eggs in a market where there is already an oversupply of cage-free eggs. This bill would put the few egg-laying farms, that farm this way, out of business.

**MDFB Policy:** We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise livestock and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices.

Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES SB 690**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colby Ferguson

Director of Government Relations

*For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396*